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MATTAPAN

DISTRICT PROFILE AND PROPOSED 1979-1981 NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

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Boston Redevelopment Authority
Neighborhood Planning Program

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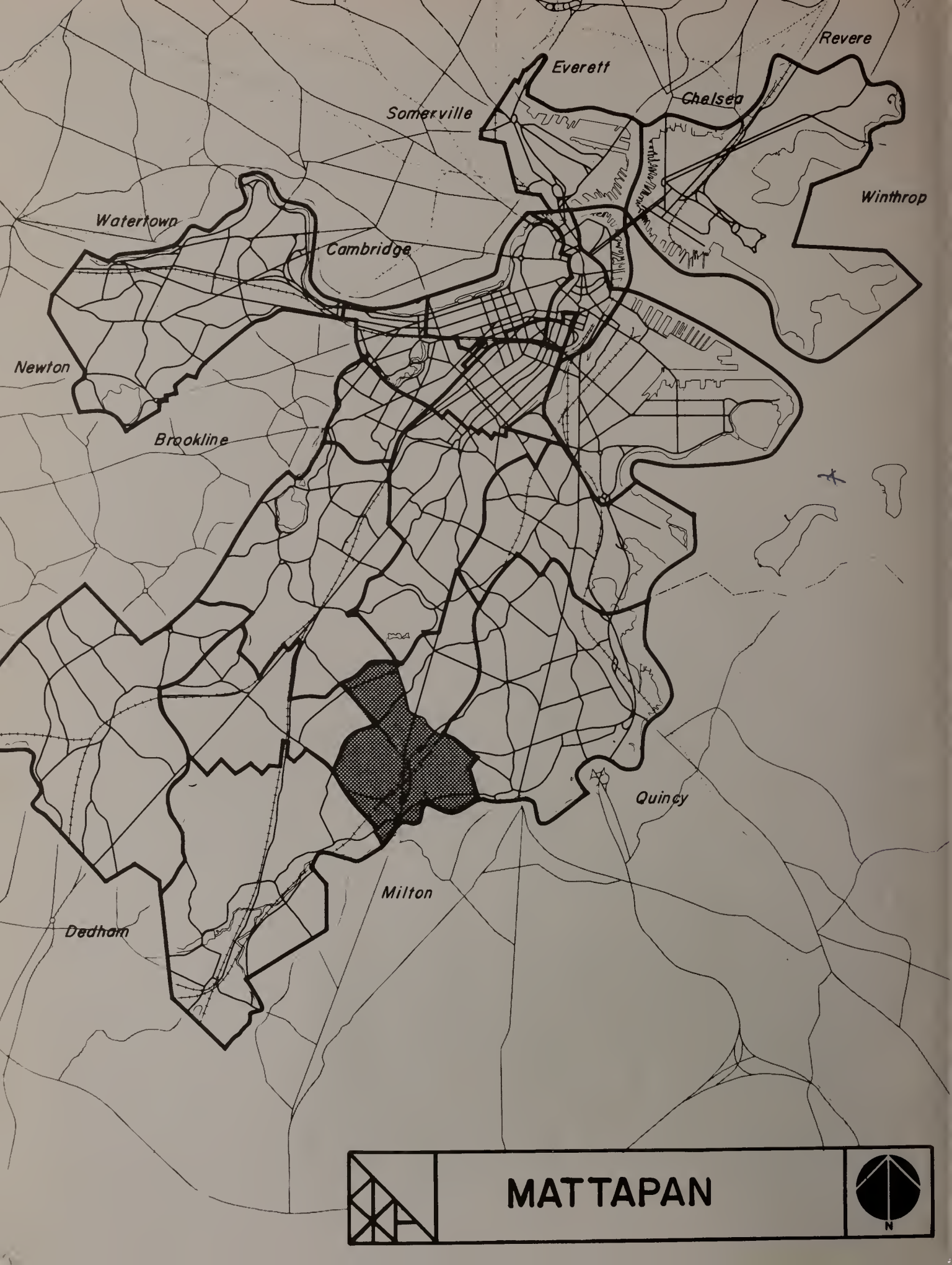
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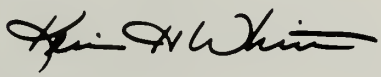
Mattapan is a growing, vital part of the City of Boston which has great potential for the future. The following Neighborhood Profile outlines the City's role in this challenging process of growth and improvement.

Since 1968, the City has invested a great deal of money and effort in Mattapan, with projects such as the Mattahunt Community School, the Mattapan Square business improvements and the Housing Improvement Program. The City is currently in the process of improving and repairing many streets in Mattapan, constructing a new tot lot on Walker Street and making further improvements to Mattapan Square. Over the next three years, the City will continue its efforts to improve the quality of life in Mattapan. Priorities for City funding and study will be housing, neighborhood confidence programs, Blue Hill Avenue business improvements and human services, especially youth and recreational services.

I hope this report will serve an important function, to encourage greater interest in the problems confronting Mattapan and our City, and to help us all develop solutions to these problems.

Sincerely,



Kevin H. White
Mayor

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I. Introduction/Summary

Mattapan is a neighborhood of contrasts. It is one of Boston's newest residential neighborhoods, yet contains a good deal of older housing, especially in the Wellington Hill section. Mattapan experienced a racial change during the 1960's, but today it is a stable, multi-racial neighborhood. Mattapan presents many contrasts in its commercial districts. Mattapan Square is one of the busiest of the older neighborhood shopping centers, with a vacancy rate of only 1%. Yet further north along Blue Hill Avenue, there are many stores standing vacant. This diversity makes for a varied neighborhood, creating opportunities as well as problems.

Mattapan was included in a 1977 City survey which studied the attitudes of the people of Boston about their city and their neighborhood. This study found that residents of Mattapan realistically recognized the problems in their area. They were also optimistic about the future of Mattapan and saw conditions improving over the next 3 years. Residents cited four issues vital to bringing about this improvement: (1) well maintained housing; (2) maintenance of parks and recreational facilities; (3) good city services; and (4) a safe neighborhood. In addition, a recent report on human services expresses a concern over coordination of human service delivery in Mattapan. Finally, Mattapan stands to benefit from recent studies by the MBTA regarding the need for improved public transit.

The City has begun to address these issues through its Neighborhood Improvement Program. The Housing Improvement Program has stimulated a private investment of $1.5 million in Mattapan's housing. In Wellington Hill, the HUD Homesteading and federally funded low interest 312 loan programs are beginning to improve what was once an area of serious deterioration. Since 1968, the City has invested $14.5 million in capital improvements in Mattapan, including street work and the Mattahunt Community School.

The City's Three-Year Comprehensive Development Strategy, as proposed in this report, for Mattapan is a coordinated effort to address the concerns of the community. As part of the effort to maintain the quality of Mattapan's residential neighborhoods, the City should:

(1) Continue funding for the Housing Improvement Program.
(2) Expand vacant lot improvements made by the BRA's Open Space Management Program.
(3) Make capital improvements and street repairs, especially in the Concentrated Investment Area in Wellington Hill.
(4) Expand efforts to curb housing abandonment.
(5) Expand the Homesteading program to City-owned recently tax foreclosed structures.

The City should also continue to make improvements for business in Mattapan:

(1) Continue aid to Mattapan Square through physical improvements (i.e., sidewalks, streetlighting, street furniture).
(2) Revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue, in conjunction with the rapid transit improvements which are now being studied by the MBTA

In the area of human services, the City should:

(1) Provide better indoor recreational facilities to parts of Mattapan not accessible to the Mattahunt School.
(2) Work with residents and agencies to improve human service delivery.

In addition, the City will continue to encourage and support the formation of small community groups to bolster neighborhood confidence and involvement.

II. District Profile

A. EXISTING COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS AND NEEDS

1. Population and Income Characteristics

As one of Boston's residential neighborhoods, Mattapan has experienced substantial growth in its population in the past 30 years; over the same period, the population of Boston as a whole has declined.

TABLE 1:
Population Changes in Mattapan

	1950	1960	1970	1975 est.)**
Mattapan	18,717	19,086	20,637	23,848
Boston	801,444	697,197	641,071	637,986
% Changes -	Mattapan			
1950 - 60	+ 1.9%			
1960 - 70	+ 8.1%			
1970 - 75	+ 13.8%			
Total Period -	+ 27.4%			
Boston -	− 20.4%			

* U.S. Census.
**1975 State Census.

The growth of Mattapan's population disguises some important demographic shifts. Mattapan has a significantly higher percentage of young and school-age children than the City as a whole, creating a greater need for educational and recreational facilities. There are fewer elderly in Mattapan than in the City as a whole. Only 22% of the adults in Mattapan are over 55, as opposed to 28% citywide.

Mattapan has also undergone significant racial change, as shown in Table 2. The Black population grew significantly from 1960 to 1970, and the percentage of Black residents has continued to grow since 1970.

TABLE 2: Racial Breakdown

Black Residents as % of Total Population

	1960	1970	1976 (est.)
Wellington Hill	0.1%	48.2%	85%
Southern Mattapan	0.7%	5.2%	25%
Boston	3.4%	16.3%	17%

The 1970 median family income in Mattapan was comparable to that of Boston as a whole: $9,500 in Mattapan, $9,133 in Boston. Family income is lower in the Wellington Hill section by approximately $1,200. The unemployment rate is higher for Wellington Hill than for Mattapan as a whole, accounting for the lower median income.

2. Housing

Mattapan is a predominantly residential neighborhood with a widely varied housing stock. Wellington Hill contains the oldest homes with more one and two family homes on the west side of Blue Hill Avenue and more triple deckers, closely spaced, on the eastern side. Southern Mattapan is a much newer area where most of the housing is less than 40 years old. These homes are predominantly single family. Table 3 illustrates the changes in the housing stock in Mattapan over the past 8 years. Notice that Wellington Hill has lost 9% of its housing units during this period, while the southern section has grown.

TABLE 3:
Change in Total Housing Units — 1970-1978

	Wellington Hill	Southern Mattapan
Total Housing Units 1970	3,163	3,925
Total Housing Units 1975	3,092	3,978
% Change 70-75	-2.2%	+1.4%
Total Housing Units 1978	2,882	3,977
% Change 76-78	-6.8%	0%

Source: 1970 U.S. Census and City of Boston Building Department.

HIP participation in Mattapan is strong, largely because the residents often have the necessary cash or savings and confidence in market values. Table 4 shows the level of participation in HIP within Mattapan and the total amount of public investment in the area.

TABLE 4:
HIP Participation in Mattapan

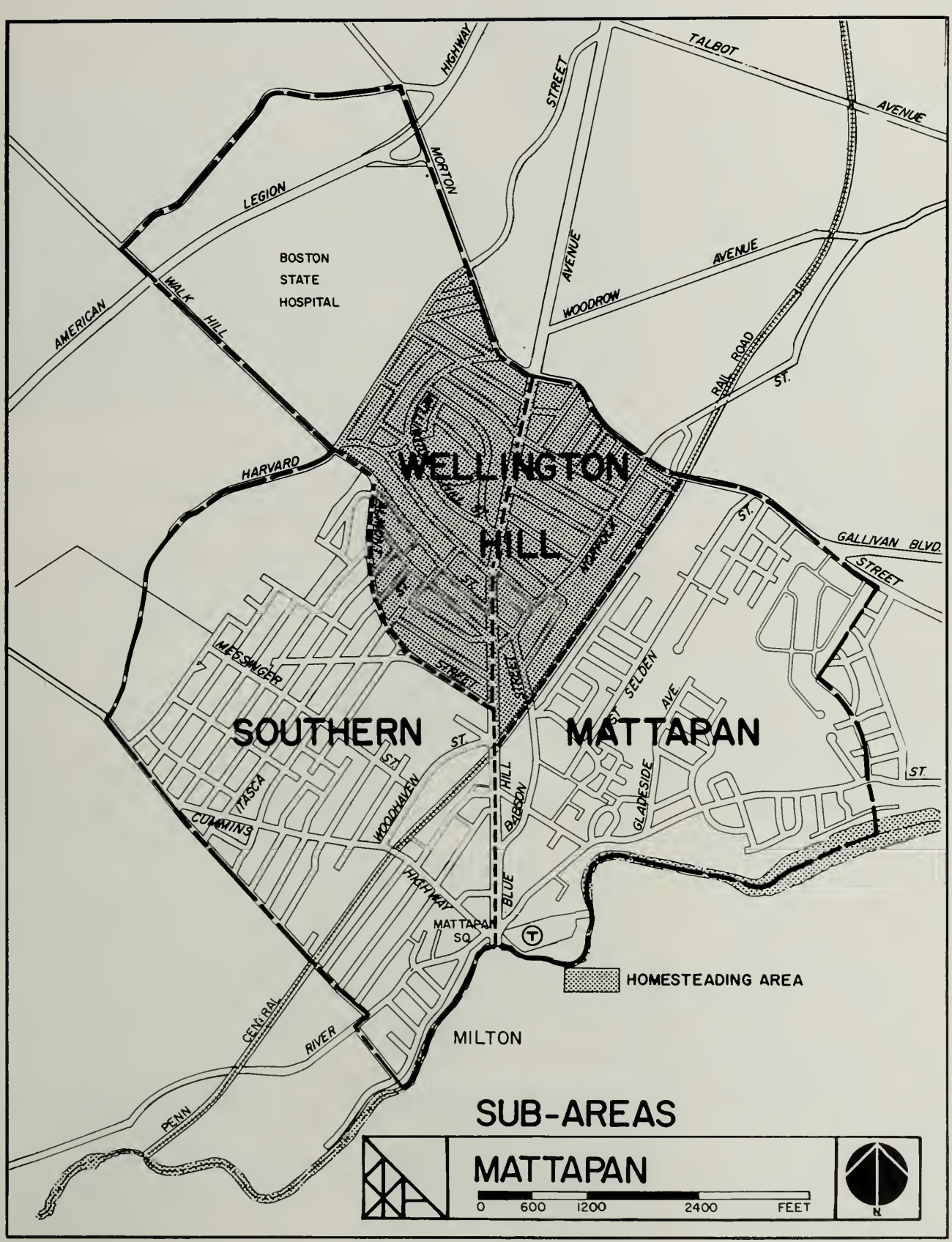
Total # of Eligible Structures	2,858
Total # of Participants Receiving Rebates	352
% of Eligible	12.3%
Total City Expenditure	$ 282,462
Total Public & Private Investment in Mattapan	$1,497,721

3. Special Neighborhood Needs — Wellington Hill

The population of Wellington Hill in 1970 was 9,428, a 3% decrease since 1960. The state census in 1975 estimated a population of 10,827, an increase of 13%. Approximately 4,539 of the residents in 1970 were Black, a 48% increase from 1960. The increase in population has coincided with a decrease of 9% in the number of housing units, resulting in some overcrowding and additional strain on the remaining stock.

During the 1960's, there was panic selling in this area, with brokers playing on residents' fears of racial transition. This discouraged many buyers from purchasing homes in the Wellington Hill area. FHA foreclosures and abandonment have been major problems in this area, leading to a deterioration of the neighborhood.

Wellington Hill has been designated a homesteading area to encourage owner occupancy and reduce the number of HUD owned buildings. Since it began in 1976, 9 houses have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been rehabilitated. In addition, federal low interest loans are available to all homeowners within the area.

Today, the western part of Wellington Hill has an owner occupancy rate of 76%, is well maintained and has become a fairly stable community. East of Blue Hill Avenue, are largely triple deckers and the rate of owner occupancy is lower than that of the rest of the district. The housing deteriorates visibly as one gets closer to Blue Hill Avenue. This part of Wellington Hill has been designated a Concentrated Investment Area and it is hoped that this coordinated effort to improve housing, city facilities and human services will improve conditions for residents.

4. **Commercial Revitalization**

The revitalization of Mattapan Square is an example of what can be done to revive the City's neighborhood commercial centers. There are 96 stores in the Square with 400,000 square feet of floor space. Mattapan Square now has one of the lowest vacancy rates (1%) of any commercial area in the City.

Public and private efforts must now concentrate on the rest of Blue Hill Avenue, where a majority of the commercial properties are vacant. These stores developed along with the trolley system in the early 1900's generally were small convenience stores. With the removal of the trolleys in the 1950's and the shift in consumer preference to large suburban shopping malls, the stores closed and are now a blighting influence on Blue Hill Avenue. A few small nodes remain strong, such as the intersection of Morton and Blue Hill, but most remaining stores are scattered along the Avenue.

5. **Transportation**

Mattapan is served by the high speed trolley line connection to the Red Line, and by a system of buses providing connections to the Orange Line and local shopping areas. As part of the MBTA's Replacement/Transit Improvement Study, an analysis was made of current bus service to each area. The study found that several of the bus lines serving Mattapan are overcrowded, especially those on Blue Hill Avenue. Bus service to Mattapan needs to be both increased and improved.

6. **Human Services**

Many social service agencies serve the Mattapan district. Those within Mattapan include the Mattapan Community Neighborhood Health Center, the Mattahunt Community School, Boston State Hospital and the Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospital. Several large agencies outside Mattapan also serve residents: the Lena Park Community Corporation and the Harvard Street Health Center. These agencies offer a wide variety of services, including counseling, welfare and health programs.

The Mattapan Multi-Service Center Feasibility Study examined existing human services in Mattapan and considered the need for a multi-service center. In addition, the Multi-Service Study identified two specific needs for the Mattapan community: (1) better youth activity programs and (2) better coordination among the various social service agencies.

B. PAST PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT (1968-1977)

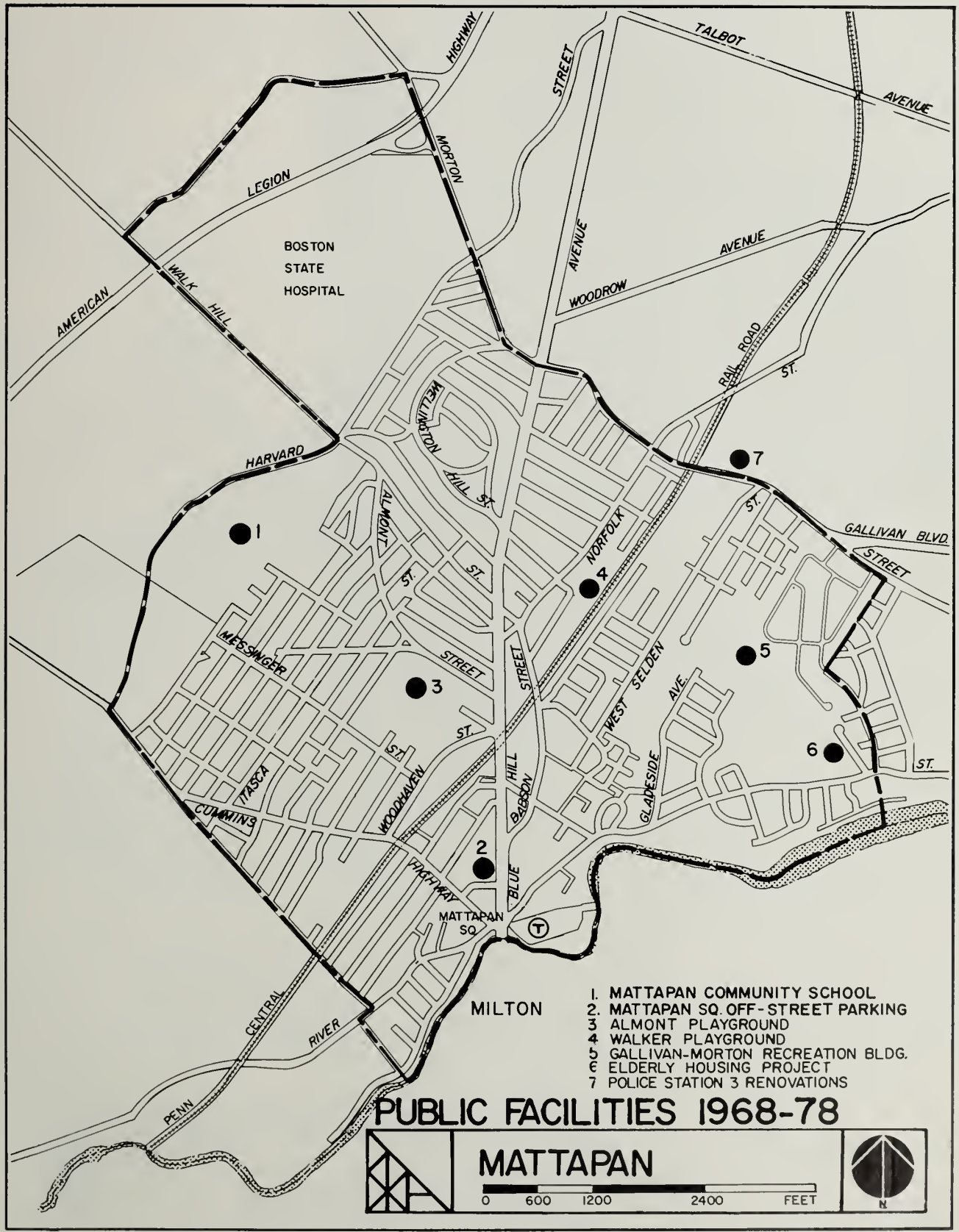
Public expenditures in Mattapan have provided a wide range of services to residents, such as housing improvements, recreational improvements and street repairs. In 1976, the City spent $12.5 million on the construction of the Mattahunt Community School and has provided continuing funding for educational and recreational activities.

Since 1968, the City has spent approximately $784,700 on street reconstruction, sewer and water projects and residential street lighting. Specifically, the City made major improvements to River Street through the construction of new streets, lighting and sidewalks. Also, the City spent $250,000 on improvements in the Mattapan Square commercial district, for street repairs, sidewalks and amenities. Another $176,000 was programmed for this area in 1977, reemphasing the City's commitment to Mattapan Square.

An indoor recreation building was constructed behind the Gallivan-Morton Housing Project at a cost of $300,000. Almont Playground and Walker Playground received major repairs and new equipment for $190,000. Also, the Walker Street tot lot is currently under construction.

Other investments by public agencies include 64 units of elderly housing built by the BHA on a site just off River Street adjacent to the Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospital. The MBTA reconstructed a parking facility for 275 cars in Mattapan Square.

Since 1968, substantial private investment has been made in Mattapan as well, including the modernization of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1. MATTAPAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL
2. MATTAPAN SQ. OFF-STREET PARKING
3 ALMONT PLAYGROUND
4 WALKER PLAYGROUND
5 GALLIVAN-MORTON RECREATION BLDG.
6 ELDERLY HOUSING PROJECT
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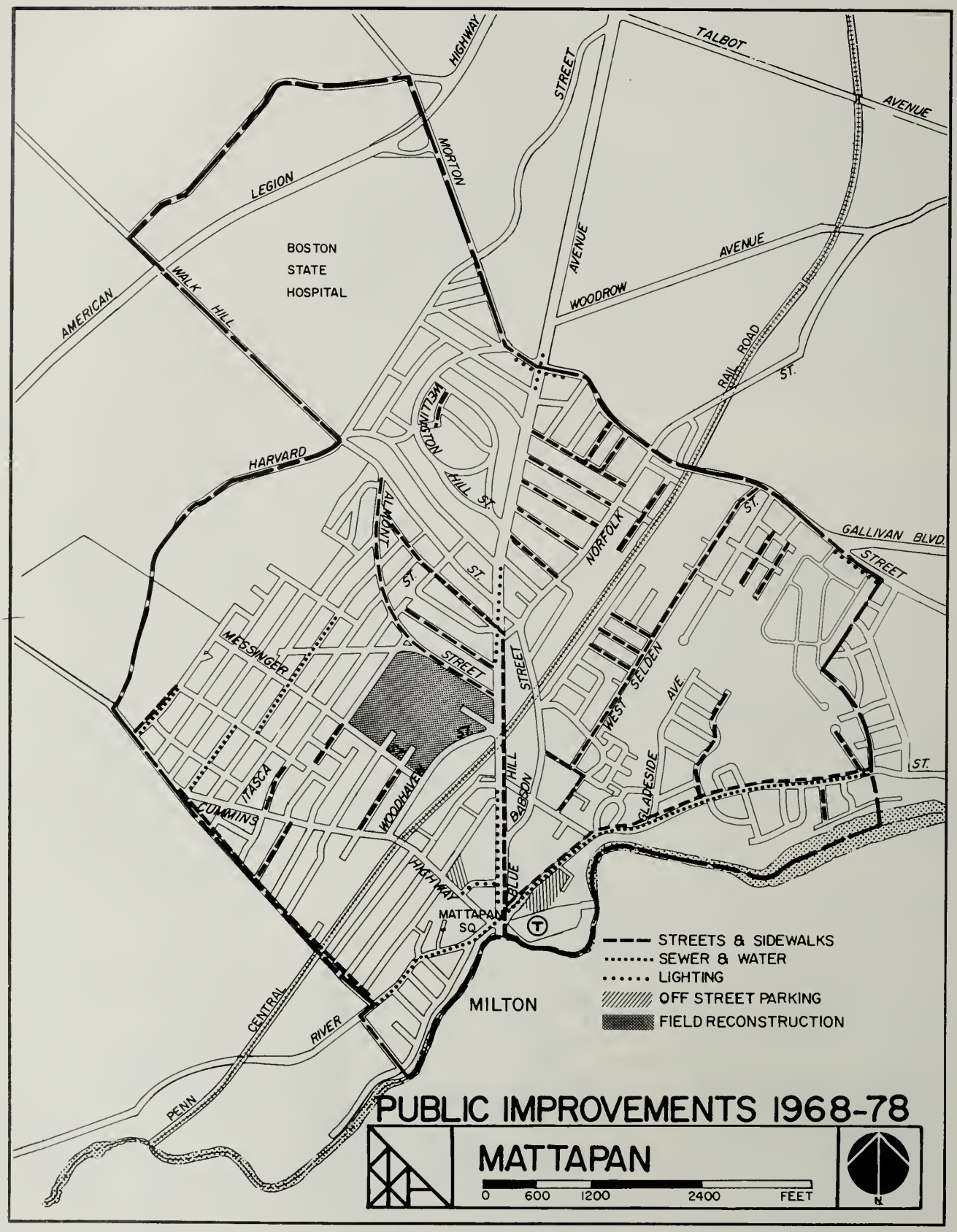
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stores and offices in Mattapan Square. Also there has been storefront rehab and new construction along Cummins Highway and in 1974 Star Market completed a large modern supermarket on Morton Street.

Several small townhouse apartment complexes were built in Mattapan such as Morton Village (208 units) and Fairlawn Apartments (250 units) near River Street. Both are completely filled, indicating a need in this area for additional market rent housing.

C. STATUS OF THE 1978 PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROGRAM

In 1978, public investment in Mattapan is concentrated in two areas: residential improvements and human services. Minor commercial area improvements are also scheduled.

1. Housing

The main components of the current City housing strategy in Mattapan all aim toward stabilizing neighborhoods through promoting incentives to homeownership. The HIP program will be continued in Mattapan in 1978 with a $200,000 allocation. New income limitations on HIP will disqualify many homeowners in southern Mattapan, leaving more funds available to lower income residents of Wellington Hill.

Homesteading in Wellington Hill is funded at $77,000 in 1978. The goal of this program is to complete rehabilitation on approximately 18 H.U.D.-owned homes by the end of 1978 and another 8 to 10 by 1979.

To improve the overall management and appearance of vacant lots and abandoned buildings in the Mattapan area, and thereby strengthen neighborhood confidence, the Open Space Management program has been added to the existing demolition and boarding program this year. Open Space crews clean and improve vacant lots, reducing their negative impact on the surroundings. This effort will be concentrated in the Wellington Hill Concentrated Investment Area.

As part of the Concentrated Improvement Program, 5 streets are scheduled for new lighting. An additional 10 streets will be improved by skim-coating or installation of new pedestrian signals. Almont Playground will also receive a $100,000 allocation for improvements.

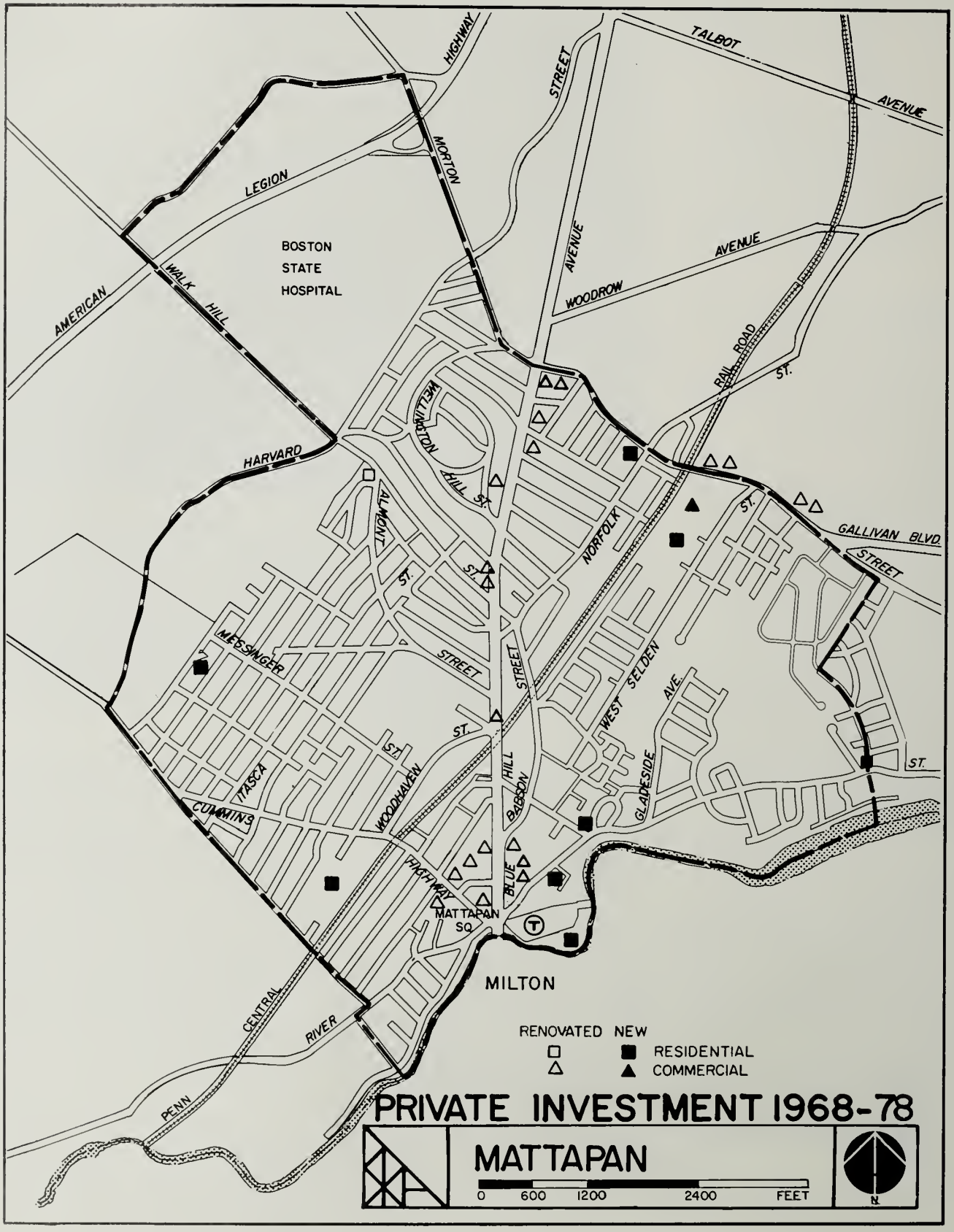
2. Human Services

Recognizing the large numbers of school age children in Mattapan, and the relatively low level of specialized activity for youth in the area, several programs have been designed for this age group at the Mattahunt Community School:

(a) A special reading project;
(b) After School day care; and
(c) Mattapan Youth Athletic Club

In addition, the City will provide support to the Mattapan Health Center ($50,000) and will continue the senior shuttle program ($17,000).

Security is a major community issue and in addition to the continuing business district security patrol, the City will continue to work with community residents to provide security throughout the Mattapan area.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III. Proposed Comprehensive Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy

A. HOUSING STRATEGY

Housing in Mattapan can be broken into two broad categories. First, there are the single-family, owner-occupied homes of the more stable southern section. Second, there are the multi-family dwellings, many of which are absentee-owned homes in Wellington Hill. In southern Mattapan, a strong private market is providing the major impetus for housing improvement; homeowners thus have an incentive for maintenance. Homeownership in Wellington Hill is growing, but there is still a need for the City to give incentives to the private market to improve the overall quality of the neighborhood. These distinct sections of Mattapan require different housing strategies.

Designated as a Concentrated Investment Area, Wellington Hill is already a part of the City's agenda for improvement and stabilization. Over the next three years, improvements will be made to streets, sidewalks, and street lighting. This effort, in conjunction with the City's Homesteading of HUD foreclosed structures and BRA's Open Space Management Program should significantly improve the overall physical character of the neighborhood.

The current homesteading program in Wellington Hill has rehabilitated nine homes and hopes to complete eight to ten more in 1979. While this program has had some limited success, expanded homesteading opportunities are also needed to prevent further neighborhood deterioration. Fifty-two buildings on the Hill are currently abandoned, and of these, nine are owned by HUD and two by the City. Several others are in the tax title process. These houses represent an opportunity for further City action to promote homeownership.

The abandoned buildings represent a problem as well as an opportunity. Abandonment has many causes: crime, lack of mortgage or home improvement loans, disinvestment by absentee owners, or inability of tenants or homeowners to pay the full cost of the housing they occupy. Once a building is abandoned, it often takes the City several years to obtain title before it can be sold. In that time, deterioration of the buildings lessens the chances of rehabilitation and lessens the quality of the neighborhood as well. Currently, the City's response to abandoned buildings is either to board them for future rehabilitation or to demolish them, which means that the neighborhood loses valuable housing units.

The City needs to develop an expedient tax foreclosure process to gain control over a building soon after it has been abandoned, then start rehabilitation and place new owners in the house. In other cities, a 90 day process has been developed and the City should work toward this goal.

The effectiveness of HIP in Mattapan will be limited in the future because of the new income limitations and the fact that HIP cannot be used in conjunction with a 312 loan in Wellington Hill. It is recommended that all income limits be waived in the 40% HIP areas to encourage market rate rehab in areas experiencing housing disinvestment.

As mentioned above, most of the housing in southern Mattapan is in relatively good condition and the private market is still strong. However, there is some concern that abandonment is moving south from Wellington Hill, and recent studies have indicated a limited amount of confidence in Mattapan by residents. Parts of southern Mattapan are still affected by the racial transition which occurred earlier to the north and this has an effect on residents' perception of the neighborhood. The City's role in this area should be one of support: it should continue to encourage maintenance of housing through HIP and neighborhood capital improvements. In addition, the City should support strong community groups who work in their area to maintain the stability of the neighborhood.

Two issues affect all areas of Mattapan: first, the need for coordination with the banks to maintain availability of homeowner loans. As a part of its neighborhood confidence program, the City should take steps to assure continued financing to Mattapan. Federal low interest (Section 312) loans are available to all owners in Wellington Hill, but the southern section requires continued support, especially private financing.

Second, the need exists in Mattapan for more intensive assistance programs for homeowners, such as counseling and referral. To support Mattapan housing, the City should be prepared to assist in all aspects of homeownership where problems may occur. Once foreclosure proceedings begin, there is little that can be done. Commitment is needed to a more intensive outreach and counseling program. Now that participation in the HIP rebate program is lower, the City should place more emphasis on other functions of the program such as contractor referrals and counseling. HIP was designed not only as a rebate program, but also as a total homeownership service. Counseling in maintenance and budgeting, as well as assistance with contractor referrals and financing are crucial to the continued stability of Mattapan housing.

Several new garden apartment complexes have been built in the past ten years in Mattapan. These are fully occupied and often have waiting lists, indicating a need for additional market rent housing in Mattapan. A good deal of land is available for such a project around the Mattahunt School and would help bring construction jobs in the area.

The two public housing projects in Mattapan, Morton-Gallivan Family Housing and the new elderly development on River Street, are among the best in the City and should be maintained at this level. Mattapan also contains several prime sites for much needed new elderly development. One is a vacant parcel at Babson Street and Blue Hill Avenue, which would give residents easy access to shopping areas, transportation, and the health centers on Blue Hill Avenue.

B. COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION

In the past, the major emphasis of the Neighborhood Improvement Program was to halt the decline of the Mattapan Square commercial district. This effort has been very successful

Mattapan Square

and has become a model for similar projects in other neighborhoods. The business district program in Mattapan will continue working to reinforce Mattapan Square's image as an important shopping area for the neighborhood. The foot patrol should be continued to provide security for shoppers and merchants. Two large parcels in Mattapan Square remain vacant and should be considered soon for development. One possibility is to build a small park/tot lot for children to use while parents are shopping.

Currently the most important issue in Mattapan's commercial revitalization is the rest of Blue Hill Avenue. Its decline since the 1960's has been rapid and many stores are vacant. Blue Hill Avenue from Dudley Street to Mattapan is part of the Boston Plan. The Blue Hill Avenue Commission has been designated by the Mayor as the primary community representative in a proposed revitalization process. The Commission has requested that all City-owned vacant lots and buildings on Blue Hill Avenue not be auctioned and will coordinate the maintenance of these areas by Open Space and crews until future development begins.

City strategies for the revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue should include the following actions:

(1) Study the current land use on Blue Hill Avenue and determine possible alternative uses or new development opportunities. A great deal of the land along Blue Hill Avenue is either vacant or contains vacant commercial buildings and creative uses should be encouraged. Possible uses include institutions which currently need expansion room, such as the Harvard Health Center or new commercial ventures in appropriate locations. Vacant lots could also be developed as side yards, off-street parking or parks to improve the visual quality of the area.
(2) Develop well defined business locations along Blue Hill Avenue. Marketing studies should be conducted to determine good locations along the Avenue and types of goods and services which will be supported by the area. The Walk Hill Street area in Wellington Hill has been suggested as a possible location for business development, especially for convenience stores. The City should support these areas in zoning changes, street and sidewalk repairs, and other amenities.

(3) Coordinate the development of Blue Hill Avenue as much as possible with new rapid transit in the Mattapan/Franklin Field area. Used effectively, new transit lines can be an important economic development agent, although care must be taken that the new transportation lines do not create adverse environmental or safety conditions for neighborhood residents. Rapid transit will not only improve access to downtown areas, but it will also increase accessibility of neighborhood shopping areas as well.

C. TRANSPORTATION

As part of the process of relocating the Orange Line, the MBTA is currently studying the needs for transit in Franklin Field/Mattapan. The importance of this project to the future of these neighborhoods cannot be overemphasized, since new transit can act as a catalyst for major economic growth and revitalization.

There are four general alternatives for transit in the Blue Hill Avenue corridor. (It should be emphasized that these routes are under study.) Alternatives A and B run up Blue Hill Avenue and Warren Street, then through the South End on Washington Street using light rail trolleys or busways. The advantages for Mattapan are that these alternatives would tie in with the redevelopment of Blue Hill Avenue and provide quick access from Mattapan Square to business centers at Dudley and Grove Hall and to the downtown.

Alternatives C and D would utilize the Midlands Railroad running northeast to southwest through Mattapan using commuter rail or light rail trolleys. This alternative would connect with Mattapan Square at Woodhaven Street. At Washington Street, the transit line could either continue along the Midlands to South Station or move along Washington and Warren Streets connecting Mattapan to Dudley Station.

Midlands Railroad

Advantages to Alternatives C and D include faster access to downtown Boston and potential access to the job market in Hyde Park. This proposal would also avoid the possible safety and noise problems which could occur on Blue Hill Avenue.

In addition, crosstown transit service from Dudley Station to Columbia Point is also being studied and only affects Mattapan through the possibility of providing access to job markets in western Boston and Cambridge.

Modes of transportation studied include trolley cars, either underground or in a reserved median, buses in a reserved median and commuter rail (Alternative C only). Other factors studied include current transportation service, community goals, environmental factors, land use impact, development potential and cost effectiveness. Given the alternatives from Phase I of the replacement transit process, what are the issues to be studied in Phase II? Of importance to Mattapan are:

(1) Opposition of some residents to trolleys on Blue Hill Avenue.
(2) Revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue vs. central location of the Midlands Railroad.
(3) Extensions of commuter rail to Hyde Park.

As part of the Replacement/Transit Improvement Study, community residents set out their goals for transit in Mattapan. The strategy of the City should be to meet these objectives. Community goals expressed in Mattapan area are:

View Toward Hyde Park and Cleary Square
Blue Hill Avenue and Cummins Highway

(1) to provide expedient transit from southern areas (Mattapan Square) to Dudley and downtown Boston.
(2) to encourage revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue with fixed rail transit as a stimulus.
(3) to avoid major changes which would drastically change the neighborhood character. New service may not be needed if short-term improvements are made.
(4) to carefully study the safety problems created by a bus or trolley median reservation combined with high speed auto traffic.

D. IMPROVED HUMAN SERVICES

In June, 1977, the Public Facilities Department published a study of the feasibility of a multi-service center in Mattapan. This study found that Mattapan has fairly good service coverage if existing services are compared with an ideal functional system. However, the two highest ranking and most diversified service agencies included in the survey are not physically located in Mattapan: (1) the Harvard Street Health Center and (2) the Lena Park Community Corporation. Harvard Street is a part of the City of Boston Health and Hospitals Department, while Lena Park is a non-profit private corporation.

Despite the seemingly adequate service coverage of the existing agencies, both the household respondents and community leadership gave low marks to the current service capacity and quality of Mattapan area social service agencies. There is also an appreciable lack of knowledge about several of the existing agencies. In addition, several agencies are inaccessible to segments of the population that could make use of their service.

The City should develop a definitive policy on how it will work with existing providers to improve human services delivery.

New Mattahunt School

E. PUBLIC FACILITIES

Residents of Mattapan have expressed concern over the lack of recreational facilities in their neighborhood. The proportions of children and teenagers in the population is high and the need for these facilities is great. The Mattahunt School serves a limited area and is in a relatively inaccessible location. Almont and Walker Playgrounds serve recreational needs during the summer, but the Mattahunt is the only indoor location available. Facilities for Wellington Hill are especially limited.

Two possible solutions have been suggested:

(1) A shuttle bus could be run between the Mattahunt and other parts of Mattapan. This would provide better access but might be of limited use to young people who do not want to make the effort to get on a bus and go somewhere far from their home.
(2) Another possibility is the conversion of one of the surplus schools in the area; either the Tileston, located on Babson Street or the Mary Baker, located between Hazelton and Walk Hill Streets, to a comprehensive recreational facility. Either of these schools would serve a different population than the Mattahunt.

F. CRIME

A 1977 City survey found that a safe neighborhood is one of the primary concerns of Mattapan residents. Residents' fear of crime is a negative element in Mattapan, but as a recent Globe article stated, "Much of the fear . . . is grounded more in emotion than in fact." Currently, the City sponsors a security patrol in Mattapan Square and the new CB Security Alert programs. In addition, the Mattapan Police Community Relations Program is working to improve communication between the residents and police officers.

In the future, the City should encourage the formation of neighborhood associations through the Mattapan Little City Hall. At the neighborhood level, residents can learn to watch out for other neighbors' homes as well as their own.

IV. Summary Proposed Three-Year Improvement Program (1979-1981)

A. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY/ PUBLIC FUNDS PRIORITIES

The City's three-year comprehensive strategy as proposed in this report for Mattapan is a coordinated effort to address important community concerns. Priorities for City funding should be housing, human services, and neighborhood stability and confidence.

1. Housing

To encourage maintenance of existing private housing, the HIP program should be continued. Over the next three years, some discretionary policies should be established with respect to the income limits. In some parts of Mattapan, emphasis should be switched from HIP to an Interest Reduction Program, which will address the problem of lack of initial funds. The emphasis within HIP should also be switched from rebates only to include homeowner counseling.

In addition, the City will continue to work on improving the quality of the neighborhoods in Mattapan, as an additional incentive to homeowners. The Open Space Management Program was initiated in Mattapan in 1978, with emphasis on cleanup along Blue Hill Avenue. Within the Concentrated Investment Area in Wellington Hill, the City will invest over $300,000 for street repairs and capital improvements. Over the next three years, these improvements should be continued and expanded throughout Mattapan.

Housing abandonment is a problem currently under study at the BRA. It is hoped that the demolition and boarding programs can be replaced to some degree with more expedient tax title policy combined with an expanding homesteading effort.

Public housing is also on the agenda for improvement, with expanded maintenance efforts at the Morton-Gallivan Project. New elderly housing development has been recommended, in conjunction with the revitalization of Blue Hill Avenue.

2. Human Services

The City will continue to work with Mattapan residents to decide the issue of a Multi-Service Center within the community. In addition, the City should continue to fund existing service agencies, such as the Mattapan Health Center. To meet the need for additional recreational facilities, the City should work to improve access to the Mattahunt and/or create a new facility in one of the surplus schools in eastern Mattapan.

3. Neighborhood Confidence

Support for Mattapan Square should continue with capital improvements, and the development of vacant sites in Mattapan Square. Blue Hill Avenue revitalization will be encouraged through marketing, land use studies and the development of small convenience districts, especially at Walk Hill Street.

4. Transportation

There is a need for re-evaluation of short-term service provided by existing bus routes. The City should encourage the MBTA to re-evaluate existing service and routes that would improve the quality of transportation and that would contribute to stabilizing Mattapan as a residential neighborhood.

It is important that the City continue to encourage community input throughout the planning of the replacement service and eventual long-term rapid transportation service. The character of the future development of Mattapan will be highly dependent on the alternative route, frequency of, and actual mode of transportation.

B. THREE-YEAR SUMMARY TABLE

Issue	Strategy	1978 NIP	Proposed 1979-1981
Housing Stability of private stock	(1) Encourage maintenance of existing stock	HIP - $200,000	(1) Continue HIP in targeted areas — allow site office some discretion with income limits. (2) Waive income limits and make Interest Reduction Program available in targeted areas with 3-7% interest depending on ability to pay. (3) Intensive homeowner counseling.
	(2) Improve physical quality of neighborhood	Open Space Management Pro-Program - $30,000 Concentrated Investment Area - Wellington Hill Street Repairs - $305,000 Capital Investments - $250,000 Demolition and Board - $70,000	Continue Open space work with emphasis on Blue Hill Avenue cleanup. Continue public improvements in Wellington Hill area. Necessity for demolition funding should be reduced with new tax title policy and homesteading program.
	(3) Reduce abandonment	Currently under study - BRA Neighborhood Planning	Develop expedient tax foreclosure process and City sponsored Homesteading Program.
	(4) Increase level of owner occupancy	HUD homesteading - $77,000	Expand homesteading in conjunction with tax process.
	(5) Neighborhood confidence	CB Security Project - $20,000	Support formation of community with block associations and work with these groups to develop programs.
Public Housing	(1) Maintain existing projects - River Street Elderly and Morton-Gallivan.		Expand Boston Housing Authority maintenance efforts and establish project-based budgets.
	(2) New elderly housing		Build new 60-75 elderly development on Mattapan Square site.
Commercial Development	(1) Continue Mattapan Square improvements	Mattapan Square Image Program - $13,500 Security Patrol - $18,600	Develop vacant parcels in Mattapan Square. — new commercial — tot lot/park
	(2) Blue Hill Avenue Revitalization		Land use and Marketing studies. Develop and support business nodes — especially Walk Hill Street, with zoning changes, street lights and amenities. Encourage new users: — institutional expansion — residential sideyards — open space
Transportation	(1) Blue Hill Avenue		Extend Urban Systems funding for reconstruction of Blue Hill Avenue.
	(2) Replacement Transit		Complete Phase II study and apply for Transit Funds, MBTA.
Improvement of Human Services	(1) Expand recreational opportunities	Mattahunt School Programs - $27,517	(1) Improve access to Mattahunt School via shuttle bus or expanded "T" service. OR (2) Create new recreational facility in surplus school serving eastern section of Mattapan, $250,000.
	(2) Better human service delivery	Mattapan Health Center - $50,000	(1) Create Mattapan Multi-Service Center. OR (2) Create central facility to improve coordination of existing human services.

Looking North Along Blue Hill Avenue at Intersection of Babson Street

Looking Towards Milton. Mattapan Square Intersection of River Street and Blue Hill Avenue with Old Hayscale and Readville Trolley.

APPENDICES

I. Neighborhood History

Mattapan was originally part of the Town of Dorchester, although it has developed its own separate character and identity. The name of the area was derived from the Mattahunt Indian Tribe, which inhabited large areas of Milton, Dedham, Dorchester, Roslindale and Mattapan. The earliest development in Mattapan was near Mattapan Square and along what is now Babson Street. Trolley service on Blue Hill Avenue in the 1890's created a residential construction boom around Wellington Hill, which was then built up with substantial two- and three-family homes and a few large single homes. The southern area of Mattapan has developed gradually since then, with single family homes on fairly large lots during the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's, and Garden Apartment Developments during the 1950's and 1960's.

The center of the Mattapan area is Mattapan Square. Traditionally, the commercial shops along Blue Hill Avenue served virtually all the needs of the residents on nearby streets, who would walk down to see friends and shop. This social interaction extended to the public transportation system where Mattapan residents would ride the trolley home from work and buy food or other needs on the way home. The elimination of the trolley in the 1950's and competition from newer car-oriented suburban shopping centers has caused some decline along Blue Hill Avenue, except at the Square, where the City has made a major investment and is committed to its revitalization. The Square now has one of the lowest store vacancy rates of any of the City's older shopping areas.

Looking Toward Lower Mills River Street Water Trough, MBTA on right

Despite some uncertainty, Mattapan has become, like the South End, another of the City's neighborhood showcases where people with many ethnic backgrounds live and interact in harmony. Because of this harmonious racial environmental character, the value of the residential and commercial properties has stabilized, and even in many cases, appreciated in value

II. 1975-1977 Neighborhood Improvement Program

The City's Neighborhood Improvement Program represents a coordinated effort by the City of Boston to restore and maintain citizen confidence in the City's residential neighborhoods. Previous Neighborhood Improvement Programs for Mattapan have emphasized housing rehabilitation, residential street lighting and sidewalk repairs. The Housing Improvement Program has been used to rehabilitate selected HUD properties under a Homesteading Program in the Wellington Hill Area. Considerable improvements are also programmed for Almont Street and Walker Playgrounds.

HOUSING PROGRAMS	1975	1976	1977
- Clearance of abandoned, unsafe, and dangerous buildings	$ 13,250 CD	$ 20,000 CD	$ 65,000
- Securing of vacant buildings for future rehabilitation		5,000 CD	20,000
- Restoration and improvement of vacant lots in residential areas	1,500 CD	--	--
- HIP — Initially in 1975, $125,000 was set aside for the rehabilitation of approximately 100 buildings. In order to meet increased homeowner demand, 1975 funds were increased to provide for the rehabilitation of approximately 300 buildings.	175,000 CD	200,000 CD	60,000
- The Urban Homesteading Demonstration Program in Wellington Hill to acquire, market and rehabilitate approximately 20 properties.	195,000 CD	245,000 CD	80,000
- Public housing improvements — Morton/Gallivan Project.	--	--	146,300
NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT PROGRAM			
- Lighting for Mattapan Square — Phase II Blue Hill Avenue (under construction)	65,000	--	--
- Off-street parking in Mattapan Square at Cummins Highway (completed)	85,000	--	--
- Lighting of the commercial node at Blue Hill Avenue and Walk Hill Street (in design, Spring construction)	40,000 CD	--	--
- Foot patrolmen (River Street, Mattapan Square)	18,720 CD	18,720 CD	18,000
- Business District Amenities — trees, benches, bollards, etc., (50% match from businessmen)	--	5,000 CD	--
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS			
Public Facilities			
- Mattapan Elementary School (under construction) First Phase — Physical Education Building	2,600,000	--	--
- Academic Building (under construction)	11,000,000	--	--
- A multi-service community center was a high priority among the residents of Mattapan. First-year funds were committed to study the development, feasibility and design of a facility.	150,000 CD	--	--
Parks			
- Tree planting	--	25,000 CD	12,500
- Walker Playground play equipment complex	--	100,000 CD	--
- Walker Street Tot Lot and Shelter	--	--	88,000
- Almont Street Park			
- two tennis courts	65,000	--	--
- site improvements	--	100,000 CD	--
- community-based maintenance and recreation program for school age children.	--	50,000 CD	--

	1975	1976	1977
Public Works			
- Residential street lighting (under construction)	58,132 CD	--	--
- Sidewalk repairs — various locations (Spring completion)	24,000 CD	--	129,700
- Engineering studies and design for traffic signal improvements at Cummins Highway and Woodhaven Street.	4,500	--	--
- Pedestrian Signal — Fessenden Street	--	--	25,000
- State Chapter 90 funds for street reconstruction on River Street from Washington Street to Blue Hill Avenue (under construction) and on Almont Street from Blue Hill Avenue to Walk Hill Street.	--	250,000	--
- Public works improvement in the Wellington Hill Homesteading Area, street lighting and street and sidewalk repairs.	--	100,000 CD	--
NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES			
Health			
- Avenue Neighborhood Health Center — A comprehensive program to provide primary health care services.	--	40,000 CD	40,000
TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM			
Community Development CD Funding	$ 675,602	$908,720	$860,500

III. Community Participation Opportunities

A. INTRODUCTION

There are many ways in which the Mattapan community shapes and directs growth within its neighborhoods and commercial centers. Planting shrubs along property lines, utilizing the Housing Improvement Program, and voicing concerns at zoning hearings all affect the quality of life in Mattapan. There are, however, several opportunities for community action at a larger scale which can effectively have a long-term impact on the growth of the community.

B. ZONING CHANGES

Zoning is a legal tool used to shape land use patterns and regulate the scale of development within given boundaries. The zoning districts in Mattapan have served the community in establishing residential and commercial uses that are reasonably consistent in scale and density. In the last ten years, changes in residential and commercial demands have led to a breakdown, in some instances, of zoning functions. Weekly zoning variance applications and the encroachment of non-compatible uses upon one another indicate a need to re-evaluate the existing zoning in Mattapan and make appropriate changes in the designation of zoning areas.

The procedures for changes and modification of the Boston Zoning Code are well established. The following is an outline of the procedures:

1. **Change of Zoning (Procedure A)**

a. Proposed zoning change is presented to the BRA Board for approval.
b. BRA Board recommends change to the Zoning Commission.
c. Zoning Commission holds public hearing following advertisement and notification of appropriate parties.
d. Zoning Commission can pass measure with seven affirmative votes.
e. Ordinance goes to the Mayor.
f. Mayor can:
(1) approve ordinance
(2) veto ordinance*
(3) take no action (this results in automatic passage after 15 days)
(4) return measure to Zoning Commission with recommendations.

*Veto can be overridden with nine affirmative votes of the Zoning Commission.

2. **Change of Zoning (Procedure B)**

a. Citizen group request hearing before the Zoning Commission.
b. Zoning Commission asks BRA for recommendation.
c, d, e, f are the same as item b.

The BRA will conduct an evaluation of present zoning in target areas throughout Mattapan specifically along Blue Hill Avenue. Information will be presented at a community meeting along with recommendations for changes. The BRA Neighborhood Planner will hold a series of working meetings with community representatives and the Little City Hall to consolidate a number of zoning

change recommendations which are both warranted in a technical evaluation and supported by the Mattapan community. Then the procedure for a change in zoning can be initiated.

C. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) PROPOSALS

The CD program involves the distribution of Federal funds that come to the City with Federal requirements that certain neighborhood improvement activities and citizen participation can be carried on under the program. The use of CD funds are primarily limited to housing, neighborhood improvements and public services in low and moderate income neighborhoods of the City. The preceeding appendix lists programs that were funded in this neighborhood during the past three years from 1975 to 1977.

The City's annual Capital Budget (CB) is usually determined at the same time that the CD budget is formulated. The City raises CB funds by selling tax exempt long-term municipal bonds to private investors to fund capital improvements such as schools, public buildings, parks, streets, lighting and underground utilities.

The City's annual process for determining both the CD and CB includes the following steps:

1. An initial neighborhood hearing is held in each Little City Hall district to explain funding requirements for the program, report on the past year's projects and present the proposed neighborhood profiles (October or November).
2. A second neighborhood hearing is held to receive and discuss neighborhood proposals for funding the next year (November or December).
3. The Little City Hall Manager, Office of Program Development (OPD) Programmer and BRA Neighborhood Planner meet to review funding requests and prepare a proposed Neighborhood Improvement Plan (December and January).
4. The proposed Neighborhood Improvement Plans are presented to the Mayor's Neighborhood Development Council (NDC) for approval. This group is chaired by the Deputy Mayor for Fiscal Affairs and includes two additional Deputy Mayors, the Mayor's Housing Advisor and Directors of the BRA, Office of Public Service and OPD (January or February).
5. Upon approval of the NDC, the proposed Neighborhood Improvement Programs are submitted to the City Council for their review and approval (February or March).
6. The City Council holds a series of neighborhood hearings on the proposed budgets. It then approves the budgets with amendments based on opinions voiced at the hearings (March or April).
7. The Mayor reviews and approves the final Neighborhood Improvement Plans (April).
8. The proposed CD application and budget is submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for its review and funding (May and June).
9. The CD funds become available for spending (July 1st).

D. COMMUNITY GROUPS IN MATTAPAN

Community groups in Mattapan can and do have a significant impact on their community.

Mary Burke
Gallivan Blvd. Tenants Association
100 Woodrow Avenue
Mattapan, MA 02126

Marie McGee
Dorchester Lower Mills Civic Assoc.
26 Standard Street
Dorchester, MA 02124

Millie Fuller
Morton Heights Action Committee
60 Lonna Road
Mattapan, MA 02126

Philbert Daley
Hazelton Street Homeowners Assoc.
105 Hazelton Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Mrs. Willie Allen
Mattapan Civic Association
85 Deering Road
Mattapan, MA 02126

Arthur Policelli
Rugby Area Group United
17 Ruxton Road
Mattapan, MA 02126

Gareth Kinkead
Messinger Street Citizens Group
54 Messinger Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Stanley James
Hosmer Street Association
38 Hosmer Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Shirley Simpson
West Selden Block Association
67 West Selden Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Kay Wall
Groveland Senior Citizens
9 Mary Moore Beatty Circle
Mattapan, MA 02126

Elder L.S. Honore — Pastor
Haitian Community Action Center
222 Woodrow Avenue
Mattapan, MA 02126

Henry Paige
Mattapan Neighborhood Block Association, Inc.
39 Colorado Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

John Germany
Mattapan Block Association
77 Itasca Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Jean Harrington
Community Action Association
44 West Selden Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Olga Jones
Rosewood Street Association
79 Rosewood Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Jack Lappin
River Street Development Civic Association
30 Ridgewood Avenue
Mattapan, MA 02126

Thurmonds Toons
Mattapan Betterment Community Association
117 Delhi Street
Mattapan, MA 02126

Lucille Koch — Staff
Community District Advisory Council
District 4
612 Metropolitan Avenue
Hyde Park, MA 02130

Stu Rosenberg
Mattapan Board of Trade
Alson's Men Shop
1624 Blue Hill Avenue
Mattapan, MA 02126

CITY OF BOSTON

Kevin H. White, *Mayor*

BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Robert L. Farrell, *Chairman*
Joseph J. Walsh, *Vice Chairman*
James G. Colbert, *Treasurer*
James K. Flaherty, *Assistant Treasurer*
James E. Cofield, Jr., *Member*
Kane Simonian, *Secretary*
Robert J. Ryan, *Director*

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROGRAM

Roy Bishop, *Director*
James Baecker, *Assistant Director*
Dennis Lloyd, *Mattapan Planner*
Anne Stoddard, *Planning Assistant*